



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Food Safety and Inspection Service
[Docket No. 98-045N]

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Food and Drug Administration

[Docket No. 97N-0074]

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[Docket No. OPP-00550B; FRL-6087-7]

President's Council on Food Safety; Notice of Meeting

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The Roles and Responsibilities Workgroup is one of six working groups which participate in the National Food Safety System (NFSS) project. We are pleased to offer our comments about the President's Council on Food Safety strategic planning process.

The Roles and Responsibilities Workgroup is made up of members from federal, state and local government food safety agencies who have worked on issues and projects dedicated to developing a fully integrated and seamless national food safety system. Workgroup members are as follows:

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During a Workgroup meeting held September 9-10, 1999 in Denver, Colorado, members voted to submit official comments on the strategic planning process to voice our support of the federal efforts and identify NFSS projects as a potential valuable link and source of information. All six NFSS workgroups have begun to develop new and innovative ideas which can provide very valuable assistance to the strategic planning process and overall plan.

As examples, the Roles and Responsibilities Workgroup wishes to summarize its work as official comments to the strategic planning process. A summary of our tasks and efforts is as follows:

1. *Propose a meeting in conjunction with the AFDO Annual Conference where industry and consumer groups can be updated on the integration project.*
 - As a method for promoting outreach, a workshop was held at the AFDO Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas this past June where NFSS Workgroup Chairs updated participants on workgroup activities. Additional programs are planned and workgroup members will advance our outreach objective by giving speeches wherever and whenever possible. Input by industry, academia and consumer groups is critical to the NFSS project.
2. *Develop recommendations for a federal audit/oversight system*
 - After evaluating numerous auditing programs currently in place, the Roles and Responsibilities Workgroup has developed a framework for an evaluation system to assure adequacy, equivalency and uniformity across all regulatory jurisdictions. This framework identifies current resources and performance parameters to be evaluated within a structured auditing system and through self evaluation.
3. *Clarify roles and responsibilities of federal, state and local officials in various food safety agencies.*
 - The workgroup has identified the core functions of those involved with food safety in the areas of research, surveillance, inspection, enforcement, education, training, risk assessment and oversight.

4. *Draft a concept plan to develop a "National Food Safety Training Center" to include federal, state and local food safety officials.*

- The workgroup has brainstormed the idea of a National Food Safety Training Center and has identified its perceived purpose and scope.

5. *Draft a list of contacts responsible for federal, state and local individual databases and provide to the Information Sharing and Data Collection Work Group.*

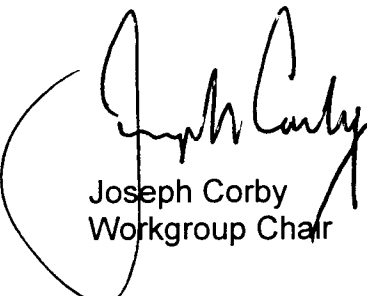
- The workgroup has developed a "Resource Assessment" questionnaire which can be utilized to determine the capabilities and needs of government food safety regulatory agencies. The questionnaire will also identify contact persons in the information systems for state and local agencies.

6. *Draft a model food safety "Partnership Agreement."*

- The workgroup has developed a model partnership agreement which can be utilized by FDA and states to fully integrate their food safety resources. The model agreement includes elements for planning and operational coordination, information sharing, inspection, food sampling and analysis, food recalls, enforcement and emergency response.

While many of the workgroup projects are in the developmental stage, others are near completion and may be ready for piloting next year. We wish to advise the President's Council on Food Safety of our efforts and our willingness to share the results of our deliberations with those involved with the strategic planning process. Although the strategic planning process is horizontal in nature and deals with the federal elements involved with food safety, it must recognize the critical importance of state and local agencies in the national food safety system.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our comments for this very important work you have begun.



Joseph Corby
Workgroup Chair